

## ZANE BOYD

### A SELECTION OF EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS & PUBLISHED ARTICLES

*As presented to the Memorial gathering honouring  
his life, in Toronto, November 24, 2013*

#### PART 5

2013, Nov. 24	Tribute to Zane, by Gord Doctorow
2013, Nov. 24	Poem to Zane, by Harry Kopyto
2013, Nov. 24	Eulogy: Bonnie Boyd

#### TRIBUTE TO ZANE

By Gord Doctorow, November 24, 2013

Zane will be speaking in part of what I have to say in the form of having some of his writings read out.

He was a man of many talents, great complexity, and internal discord. Zane could have been anything. He could draw beautifully, play the classical piano with wonderful skill and even whistle an entire symphony flawlessly. He wrote with brilliant clarity and logical harmony. He was a rigorous editor in political projects. He could dance—folk dances—and performed for years alongside old friends from his early days in Ukrainian dance to his new friends in later days. He had extraordinary political acumen, a penetrating mind, and studied theoretical and historical questions on his own and in concert with his intellectually astute comrades. In an earlier era he would have been called a polymath. But his psychologically debilitating demons expressed as bipolar disorder and bulimia shackled his natural abilities and kept derailing him for most of his life.

The creative side of his activities were echoed in the visual-artistic talent and sensibilities of his father, John, and sister, Bonnie. Not only did John exhibit a late-blooming talent as

a painter but he spent a goodly portion of his life as a journalistic writer and editor. Zane's late brother Kim was an exceptionally talented jazz pianist. Zane's mother had played tenor sax in a jazz band, played the mandolin in the Shevchenko ensemble, was an alto in the choir. Other relatives of Zane were musicians as well.

Zane came from an extraordinary political family which had developed an unusual and noteworthy political turnaround. He was born a red diaper baby, the third child of John and Gladys Boyd. They were active members of the Communist Party of Canada. They participated enthusiastically in the cultural life of Ukrainian-Socialist Camp Polermo and the United Jewish People's Order. John had served as editor of The Canadian Tribune, the organ of the Communist Party for quite a few years. Moreover, they came out of the Ukrainian Communists. The politics of Ukrainians were polarized into communists and fascists.

But something new had happened. The three offspring turned from the Stalinist Communist Party and turned toward a left Marxist alternative—Trotskyism. First came Kim, whom I met around 1964 when we were both students at the University of Toronto. Next came Bonnie shortly after. In about 1966 or 67, when Zane was still a teen, he joined the Young Socialists, the youth wing of the League for Socialist Action, which was the Trotskyist movement led by the fierce and brilliant worker-intellectual Ross Dowson.

Those who left the Communist Party in disillusionment went into one of three directions: abandon politics, move to the right, move to a different left such as Trotskyism or the NDP. The 1960s was the time of the great youth radicalization of the baby-boomer generation. So, young, sophisticated radicals such as Kim, Bonnie, and Zane were attracted to revolutionary, passionate politics. They were less likely to become hippies or yippies because of the fact that they were steeped in Marxist theory and history, even if the Stalinist legacy had distorted both.

They were part of a great wave that saw the possibility of mass transformation from a society dominated by the threat of nuclear war, anti-colonialist upheavals, student

uprisings in all three sectors of world revolution: the advanced capitalist countries (for example, the U.S., France, Canada); the so-called workers' states (e.g. Czechoslovakia); and the semi-colonial and colonial countries (e.g. Mexico). They were inspired by the Cuban revolution and Che Guevara, by the rise of Women's Liberation, and by the anti-racism struggles of Blacks in America. Very heady stuff, very inspiring, and very alluring.

These were the powerful environmental influences that informed Zane's consciousness. Around 1967, Zane was in Moscow studying Russian. He was a stranger in a strange land. A stranger because he was already moving against the grain of so-called Soviet socialism and in a strange land because all the upheaval associated with the free-wheeling politics of the youth rebellion elsewhere was absent from the landscape of the Soviet fatherland.

While still in Russia, in 1968, Red Army troops came from Russia to quell the incipient anti-Stalinist rebellion in Czechoslovakia, as it was known then. As it happened John and Gladys were in Czechoslovakia at the time. This betrayal of national autonomy and basic democratic principles espoused by the Bolsheviks under Lenin was the last straw for John and Gladys and they moved closer to the ideological leanings of their offspring. Zane's political consciousness took a decisive turn—as an outspoken and rigorous critic of the Soviet leadership and the path they had chosen since the takeover of Stalinism. In the play *Marat/Sade* by the radical German playwright, Peter Weiss, Weiss has the brilliant French-revolutionary leader, Jean-Paul Marat passionately expounding his philosophical outlook: “Sometimes you have to pull yourself up by your own hair, turn yourself inside out, and see the world through fresh eyes.”

Zane returned to Toronto and became active in the Young Socialists and League for Socialist Action. I recall how Zane challenged the lack of serious political discussion and education in the youth movement. He was in a minority persistently insisting on the need to go beyond youthful passion and enthusiasm and to develop the intellectual tools to create a strong cadre. Having embarked on a program of self-study, he wanted that to extend to all his comrades. He wanted logical thought, clear-mindedness. He wanted

something that retained the best traditions of Marxism and carefully learned to avoid the errors of Stalinism. And he preached the doctrine of maintaining a mass orientation to the working class and oppressed. He rebelled at the idea of a small group, no matter how politically correct, substituting itself for the mass movements.

As you can imagine, Zane was involved in all kinds of discussions, speaking, writing, discussing. I'm going to pause to provide you with an example of the lucidity of his writing, where his sharply analytic mind not only took on factual rebuttals but drew upon historical and theoretical understanding of how capitalist society works in order to educate—not merely score a point.

From the Jan. 29/1997 (Toronto) *Globe and Mail* letter to the editor. Titled “Forward to the Past”.

In "Longer Work Week Urged" (Jan. 23) "... you report that a panel of 11 Ontario Tory MPPs has urged the scrapping of 1,500 regulations and 45 statutes. Among the panel's proposals: A 50-hour work week, eliminating overtime restrictions, cutting severance pay requirements, and exempting from pay-equity laws companies with fewer than 50 and preferably under 100 workers.

Unlike so many dusty provincial reports, this one is getting speedy action—17 bills table now, more to follow. Such legislation will lead to an even smaller percentage of even more overworked skilled staff; an even more underpaid class of job-insecure, disproportionately female workers; and an ever-growing army of even poorer and angrier unemployed pressuring wage rates still further down. This, of course, is its purpose.

MPP Frank Sheehan's assertion that his panel's proposals will result in job creation is predictable and pure pablum for the pious. The Ontario Federation of Labour's Gord Wilson, on the other hand, is only partly right that “the thread going through all of this is that they are attacking the most vulnerable and lowest-paid workers.” The Harris government, like business-backed regimes the world over, won't stop short of undoing

every significant social and environmental policy standing in the way of profitability. And trade union rights and freedoms are ultimately on the agenda. That is the thread.

The paradox is that ours is the richest economy we have ever known—provincially, nationally and globally. There is greater wealth than ever before both in absolute and relative, per-capita terms. And overwhelmingly it is in private hands. But this not simply a case of corporate greed, as so many left-leaning critics like to believe. This is how capitalism works. Corporation CEOs are not gluttonous ogres. They have little choice, driven by the need to “improve productivity and maximize efficiencies so as to compete in a global economy,” as the panel’s report so ably puts it. To survive, it is not enough to be profitable: you must be as or more profitable than everyone else. Call it insane, if you like. But it is the compelling logic of a system championed as God’s gift to man, the final stage in evolutionary wisdom, and humanity’s only option.

Commentators as diverse as Jeremy Rifkin and Henry Kissinger have warned of the ominous social consequence looming in the current corporate agenda. The 25-year postwar period which saw unfettered economic expansion, a rising standard of living, and progressive social and labour legislation was a historical anomaly, fuelled by postwar reconstruction and the Cold War. Such a period won’t come again. Today’s agenda isn’t back to the future. It’s forward to the past—to the 1920s, to the 1930s—only in an even more globalized and explosive form. In 10 or 20 years’ time—when protests paralyze the streets, when cops and goons are busting heads, when churches are food banks, and when fascists find a new crop of brown-shirts among disaffected youth and the unemployed—let it not be said we weren’t forewarned. Of such stuff are popular revolutions made—or Hitlers born.

History repeats itself—for those ignorant of its lessons."

Zane Boyd, Toronto

He raised new questions all the time and wanted to know what people thought about problems of theory, such as the nature of nationalism as a revolutionary force. In all these

discussions, Zane's mind became sharpened as the edge of his conscious mind rubbed against the coarse surfaces of politically obstinate interlocutors. Zane always wanted people to look at things from a fresh and unbiased standpoint. A particularly salient example of this occurred in the late 1990s. James Petras, a Marxist theoretician, whose trenchant criticisms of imperialism were unmatched by his sycophantic tirades in defence of the bureaucracies that dominated in the workers' states such as Cuba and the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, the Cuban leadership had charged a number of dissidents with treasonous acts. They were jailed, tried in secret, and condemned to prison. For Stalinist apologists and Cuba-philes, like Petras, there was no question that the Cuban leadership were right and that the dissidents were wrong.

Zane's view was that secret trials did not serve the interest of advancing socialism—quite the opposite. He remembered the egregious blemish of the Soviet show trials. In a letter to the editors of *Canadian Dimension* in 2003, Zane wrote:

"With 85 years experience with so-called "actually existing socialism", socialists as well as the broader left long ago earned the right and indeed the obligation to criticize and even condemn the actions of existing socialist governments. All the more so now, when Cuba remains the only self-proclaimed socialist country that retains an degree of credibility and following among radical forces and continues to represent socialism in the eyes of the world."

Zane argued that even sympathizers of the Cuban revolution could not judge whether these dissidents really were counter-revolutionaries because they were not permitted a public trial. How could one judge what was going on? How could one decide if Cuba was making a mistake? How could socialists develop a sense of objective clarity and confidence without having the facts revealed in a fair and complete way? Should the defenders of the Cuban revolution simply surrender to the authority of the infallibility of the Cuban leadership? How could this possibly serve the cause of socialism? Zane commented on this in the Summer 2003 issue of *New Politics*:

"Everything with Petras is U.S. vs. Cuba, state vs. state. There is nothing regarding Cuba's internal situation. Petras scarcely mentions the U.S. embargo and its effects. More significantly, he fails to address the question of how the base of Cuban society—workers, students, intellectuals—are expected to fulfil their essential function in defense of the revolution. Instead, they are relegated to a passive role, while the entire burden of the revolution seems to be shouldered by the Fidelista leadership."

Zane debated these questions openly with Canadian socialists. He was criticized of course, but Zane never succumbed to name-calling, offensive declarations, or anger. He gently explained his position and his reasons, acknowledged any minor errors of fact that he might have made, but insisted on the fundamental principle of critical thought and an orientation toward educating, by example, the workers and others struggling toward the concept of a new society. On October 3, 2003, he responded to criticism by a former leader in the Canadian Trotskyist movement, Phil Courneyeur—a staunch identifier with Latin American struggles:

"...please let me assure you that I don't harbour any hostility to you or, for that matter, to anyone else who takes a position of uncritical support for the Cuban regime. I admit that I could, after all, be wrong on this issue, although I don't think so. My hope is to engage in a frank and comradely discussion. My response to Petras was not based on his criticisms of the "intellectual left's" particular stance on this issue. Frankly, I consider his criticisms, in part, valid. I, for instance, would not have signed a circular petition by Joanne Landy and her colleagues or by anyone else—unless it was a petition by socialists, that is, which regrettably was not circulated. My objection to Petras is his frankly hysterical critique of Chomsky et al. based on trumped-up and slanderous charges and innuendo. Also, his sycophantic support of the Cuban regime's policies. You don't stand your own arguments in good stead by falsifying the arguments of those you criticize!!"

John Boyd told me in a conversation I had with him shortly after Zane had died that Zane had this unusual presence of expressing himself with dignity and respect and consideration for others even when engaged in political debate. This was the other side of the image of Zane's mind as an intellect continually sharpening its edges against the coarse surfaces of opponent discourses. Zane knew that political—and not only political—discussion was best served and developed through patience, logic, and clarity. All that fierce polemics brought with it was cacophonous noise that created no connections.

It is this attribute of Zane's—his dignified and respectful way of dealing with ideas—that led to a somewhat extraordinary vote of confidence by conflicting radical groups. It was in 1991-92—in the raw and close aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union leadership. For years, various contending political groups of the Trotskyist persuasion vied for hegemony, trying to out-recruit and arguing over the nature of the Soviet Union, socialism, etc. But the Soviet Union had collapsed and socialism was in trouble. What was there to do? These warring tendencies decided that they would hold a conference to discuss critically and openly what the options for the future would be and how to assess the new situation. But who should be the coordinator for such a conference? Who could everybody trust and command respect to be the public spokesperson for such a project? The choice rapidly became clear. Zane was the undisputed pick. He was the person whom everybody trusted to be non-sectarian and who carried the great intellectual weight and calmness to influence the tone of the proceedings. He was the person that everyone knew had a mass orientation to politics and who was constantly re-evaluating. He had a well-known reputation for clarifying complex issues.

This account of Zane's activities and life seems like a wonderful reminiscence. Was there more? To be sure. Zane was also practising piano, reading and studying theoretical works, writing letters to the editor to popularize struggles and explain basic concepts to a wide audience. Zane danced and Zane drew. Zane made many non-political friends. Zane enjoyed symphonic music. He travelled a bit. When the distinguished leader of Canadian



Trotskyism, Ross Dowson, died, Zane rolled up his sleeves and pitched in to organize a memorial tribute. This tribute spanned the political life history of Canadian Trotskyism and Ross's central role. Zane took on the arduous task of editing the historical record to be read out as a speech and filmed. He became our choreographer of thought and ideas.

He worked at many different jobs and lived in many different places. I recall getting him a job at a data entry company in the mid-1970s as an illustrator for technical writing. I was the editor. But Zane didn't last long. His work was excellent, but he didn't last long. I didn't know much about Zane's illnesses. I didn't know he was bulimic or that he was a binge alcoholic. He just up and quit and I found out why only later. Zane followed that pattern. He would get a job, do splendidly, then drink himself out of work. He would be forced to go on welfare, to move to yet another apartment. He tried going back to university to study music—at York University—but he didn't last there either despite the fact that he had financial aid. It was always the same. And yet, and yet, he was able to weave into the tangled threads of his life an ability to pick up where he left off. He would disappear from political view, suddenly reappear, be all caught up, intervene, study, and then disappear.

Yet Zane developed relationships. The women he knew were great admirers of this brilliant, gentle man. He loved and was loved. He had a gentle sense of humor. But then he would get himself into trouble. On more than one occasion, he would go off on his own in a room or even in an outdoor area and drink himself into a stupor. Someone would find him before he hurt himself irreparably. This happened at least a half dozen times. The last time, nobody was there. Zane was drunk, he dropped a glass and stepped on a shard causing bleeding from his foot. At some point, he walked over to his piano and played to himself. Eventually, with nobody to find him in time, he bled to death. It was an artist's death. It began with accidental violence but trailed off into what might be seen as a poetic finish. It was not unexpected, it was just unwanted.

When I say it was unwanted, I mean that those of us who were touched by him admired him, respected him, loved him did not want Zane to shake off his mortal coil.

Apprehending his father's imminent death, the poet, Dylan Thomas, pleaded with his father "Do not go gentle into that good night" but to rage against it. But Zane was already prepared to die. He had already decided that life had become unbearable. I'm not saying that he deliberately bled himself to death. I am just reporting on good authority that he had already indicated a desire to end it all.

Zane was a complex and contradictory individual. He was gifted and talented and he had a large moral conscience. He was honest and forthright and he wanted to help make the world a better place. But the place he sought could not hold him. Something inside him made life too slippery. That was beyond his control. He struggled mightily all his life. His successes were brilliant and short-lived. His failures were furtive, episodic, recurring, and out of rational control. His powerful mind and his grasp of reality yielded to his internal demons.

His life is worth celebrating nonetheless. He gave of himself when he could. His cool, critical thinking are an inspiration to his comrades and friends. The imprint of his creative and playful interactions persists among us. He was a towering comrade and friend. Long may his memory remain.

## POEM TO ZANE

*By Harry Kopyto, November 24, 2013*

Zane—you had so many sides  
So many drives  
So many lives  
So many things you had to do  
Before your last adieu

There was the Zane  
The comrades know  
Red diaper baby all aglow  
With shoulder to the wheel of fate  
Against the bourgeoisie irate

A mind that questioned all that's taught  
Your own ideas you had wrought  
When duty called, you always fought

When tossed, you always caught the ball  
You were for one; you were for all  
Weather foul or weather fair,  
Zane, you always did your share

You know your father had a life  
That sought to better a world of strife  
Where workers ruled  
Where wealth was pooled—  
But then you looked through your own eyes  
You saw your dad deceived by lies...

Kardash, Buck and Kashton  
Morris, Sydney and Carr too  
But rifts began to loosen the glue  
'56 and '67  
For the CPC, these years were not made in heaven  
Kim, Bonnie and you took your father aside  
And told him he had been taken for a ride;  
The old zigs and zags had no place to hide...

A balance sheet you helped John make  
It wasn't easy to see the mistake  
But John's mind was wide awake  
His children helped John the truth to see  
And the rest, as they say, is history

Did I not see you once at Massey Hall?  
When the Red Army chorus and dancers came to call?  
Slavic women on the stage  
dancing in colours that blind  
They still whirl in blazing skirts  
In the recesses of my mind.

I saw you kick-dance Hopak-style  
You could have gone on for a mile.  
I grew fatigued just to see  
All the heights you leaped with glee  
81 Christie—did I see you there?  
No one else would ever dare  
Arms linked back to back with Kim, your bro  
Boy did you guys put on a show!

The AUUC—memories now fade  
Perogies steamed on every plate—  
Dances, concerts, banquets too  
It was in the Labour Temple as we all knew

Camp Polermo, where you grew  
You spread your wings and then you flew  
300 Bathurst—song and dance  
Soroka shirts—boy did you prance.  
You kicked, you leaped up in the air  
Like no one else would ever dare

Your family—they meant so much  
Loving, warm, a feminine touch  
Phone calls deep into the night  
Opinions exchanged—but never a fight  
With Kim and Bonnie in the LSA  
Each of you played your roles each day

Zane's thoughts were often razor-sharp  
If you disagreed, he would not carp  
He would let you lay it all out  
He didn't denigrate or shout  
Logic and clarity in thought  
Is all that he had ever sought  
I remember as if it was today  
The things that Zane would have to say

In the 60s, the time had come  
Youth radicalization had joined the strum

The notes were sharp—the message clear  
The class struggle was now here.  
You fit the times—you dared to dare  
You had some thoughts you wished to share

Your joined the YS—it was your way  
Political action had come to stay  
We saw you Zane, in active mode  
The Guerilla House became your abode  
With comrades youthful, full of zeal  
Zane would breathe and dream and feel

With revolt all around  
Everywhere Zane would abound  
Speaking, marching, writing, reading,  
Organizing, joining, meeting,  
Giving guidance deep and strong  
You found the place where you belong

End the arms race! Ban the bomb!  
Bring them back alive from Nam!  
End Canada's complicity! Get off the ICC!  
Hands off Cuba—let it be free!  
Your LSA and YS days  
Reflect a special fertile phase  
You led, you fought,  
You stood your ground  
All your talents were unbound.

Fair Play for Cuba, YCND  
SUPA, SNCC and the NDP  
The YCL and the NDY  
The CP—Oh man—that made you cry  
You carry the line, or you say good-bye

Your mind razor-sharp  
Your logic secure  
No lie could survive  
No pretence could endure  
The vice-grip of your thought.  
If one dared to debate you,  
Misery was their lot

There were times when sadness  
Carved a scar on your soul  
There were times when your

shattered dreams took their toll  
There were times when none of us  
knew what to do  
But there were never times  
When we stopped loving you

You always told us,  
Slow things down, listen first  
Keep open minds—  
sects are accursed  
When you spoke at a meeting  
We followed each word  
Precision and insight is what we heard  
Your eloquence stirred us  
We learned so much  
Yet you never lost your common touch

There was a trip I have to tell  
It really didn't go so well  
Piano school in Moscow called  
But when you returned, we were appalled  
It seemed as if your life had stalled  
Your eyes were like glass,  
Your body lost mass  
Your temperament—it dimmed its glow  
You left so high—you came back low

You had no time to scorn or hate  
To put down or to berate  
You were an empath, through and through  
Younger comrades looked up to you  
For 40 years, you were in the loop  
With the comrades of the Forward Group  
You gave us the best years of your life  
Through the good times and the strife

And still there was a darker side  
And still there was no place to hide  
And still there was a driving force  
And still it pushed you off your course

Zane, you had a writing flair  
William Boyd, your nom de guerre  
Letters columns said it all  
In the summer, spring and fall  
There was no subject free from terse

Acerbic darts from your words' curse  
Condoronto—your mongrel word  
Proved this city's housing policy absurd

Hypocrisy—it made you scream  
When Rae banned Langdon, you let off steam  
Gays afflicted, Schreyer said  
Dear Ed, you wrote, ignorance you bed

From Zane Boyd hotmail, arrows were flown  
Deep into the Bullshit Zone  
A thousand letters you would send  
Ciao, for niao, your letters end

Pills and food  
did Zane no good  
A German trip would soon ellipse  
And then there were those rehab trips  
Erzats solutions could not eclipse  
All those ups and all those dips  
And still, Zane, you would always strive  
To come back again, and full of life

Do you recall that crazy fall  
You wanted to study music?  
But first you had to prove  
And show  
that you were not just musing.  
And so York's music department head—  
a Professor Trishy Sankaran  
Told you "Ok Mr. Boyd,  
Show me what you can"

And so, audition time it came  
And you told him, "I'll play the game  
With a little tune I know  
A Beethoven sonata  
And now Professor, I'll let it flow"  
And this you said with a mischievous glow

"And what instrument," the Professor  
asked, "will you play?  
Will it be a piano or a flute today?"  
"I think not," Zane replied  
And the Professor's face turned all-white  
As Zane whistled a 12-minute etude

That left the Professor wide-eyed and mute.  
The Professor said "You didn't even miss a note.  
You can *teach* my class," (That's all she wrote)

Always gentle, always kind  
Always ready to change his mind  
He would listen to what you had to say  
Everyone was given his day  
Slowing things down, he showed respect  
But never tolerated a sect  
Everyone had the right to speak  
The truth would come to those who seek

We all knew your talents  
Your writing, your mind  
The speed of your thoughts  
Left us behind  
But there were moments when  
The stars were not quite aligned  
And when you couldn't do all you wanted to  
You hid those moments with the colour of blue

When the walls fell in '89  
Foes that fought sought to call time  
Let's not attack; let's not shout  
Let's have a moment of time out  
Let's not play that tired game  
Let's not cast stones; Let's not blame

So we had a meeting at the ISC  
To discuss what the future should be  
The person we chose to issue the call  
To discuss the rise after the fall  
To look beyond our past history  
Was none other than Zane B.

The women that Zane loved  
Knew his sensuous side  
Others rushed and rushed  
He would tip-toe and glide.  
Romantic, loving, caring, giving  
In his heart, never deceiving  
Though occasionally leaving,  
Leaving those who loved him grieving...



Zane had a sweetness that was sublime  
But his joy and fervour  
Could turn on a dime  
He was haunted by a sadness  
That came back time after time

You wanted to be self-aware  
To go where others would not dare  
You wanted to travel inside your mind  
To seek and search and hunt and find  
The spirits lurking inside your soul  
That was your need; that was your goal

But Zane you were driven by goals so deep  
That no human being could possibly keep  
And when these goals could not be met  
Reality would win the bet  
And when you realized you would not win  
Disappointment always set in  
As your projects and hopes went askew  
Zane, you went back into Deep Blue

And still there were unheeded cries  
And still you could not touch the prize  
And still, cast on a sea of hope,  
We saw despair, and tossed a rope...

There were a million things, Zane, you could do  
You were an artist, dancer, writer without peer  
Your fingers made the piano burn and sear  
The recorder's notes would burst outside the holes,  
With women you would always burn their souls

There were moments when you soared like an eagle in flight  
When you felt imbued with power and with might  
And then you would fall, you would slumber; you would sink  
These moments became drops in a sea full of drink

You had a thousand things to do  
Calligraphy and scrabble too  
Music drenched your very soul  
From Beethoven to Rock and Roll  
Letters you wrote pretensions would tear  
You said it all; you laid it bare

Tai-chi, joking, singing, too  
Natty dresser, big time fresser  
Nothing that Zane couldn't do  
From contra-dancing to cooking a stew  
No one pushed you like you pushed you  
Too many times you pushed too hard  
And sometimes things would come apart

Still the darkness of clouds oft befuddled your mind  
At moments, you felt overwhelmed and resigned  
And yes, there were times  
When you were beyond reach  
Like a fish out of water,  
Like a whale on a beach

There was a side to Zane  
Gentle as a breeze  
If he saw you were upset,  
He would put your mind at ease  
Rancour and bitterness were not his banes,  
Empathy and caring ran through his veins

There was one thing that Zane  
Would never do  
He never would say something  
He didn't believe to be true  
He needed to know, he needed to see  
Without first-hand knowledge, it just wouldn't be  
If the truth was dim,  
It just wasn't him

And still there was torrential rain  
That fed the current of your pain  
Its source deep in a troubled brain  
Enough to drive any man insane

Crimson drops, they tell me  
Fell on keys of ebony white  
And so you fell asleep at last  
Your last beguiling night  
Notes of laughter and sadness  
Full of joy and madness  
Sprang forth from those keys  
And finally, put your soul at ease.

## **Eulogy: Bonnie Boyd**

### **ZANE**

I miss my brother Zane every day. He was - as was my brother Kim - a star to my wandering bark, my rudder, my mentor, my steadfast vanguard.

This may seem contradictory to many of you, as Zane was so often seen as *UN*steadfast, *UN*reliable, *UN*stable, and - it was plain - that in his personal life - in much of his daily or monthly life - he *was* unstable. He was mentally ill.

From the age of 17 or 18, when he was full of promise and energy, and with a desire to be a political activist, my brother began to suffer depressions and intense self-doubts, which alternated with periods of intense activity and intellectual discovery and productivity. He had become bi-polar.

But, of course, in the late 60's there was little awareness of this disorder, and none of the present treatments - which were not to be developed until the late '80s - twenty years later!

Also, early in his life, he sadly developed a serious eating disorder, which began as anorexia nervosa - rare in men (and also largely undiagnosed for decades) then becoming severely bulimic, which he suffered - in secret - his entire life.

Like most people with a mood disorder - and with no diagnosis nor treatment offered - Zane began to SELF-treat. In his case, with alcohol and Tylenol. In a short time he had developed a third major mental/emotional illness - addiction to alcohol - which eventually led to his sad death.

His entire adult life, Zane struggled to understand and treat these illnesses.

Despite many many failures with psychiatrists, medications, intense programs, he kept on learning, reading, telling his story, and taking our society to task for its shameful, criminal neglect of - and minimizing of - the needs of our many, many people with mental illness.

He spoke out about the lack of housing for the mentally ill, the lack of education about the entire issue, the discrimination allowed - and even *fostered* - towards the mentally ill.

You've all heard it. He's just a drunk. Why doesn't he just get it together and get a job! You've heard it all - the ignorance, the lack of compassion.

Yet, while struggling with these various terrible illnesses, Zane still found the strength of character, the political perspective, to fight for all mentally ill persons, to make us ALL aware of our responsibility to speak out on behalf of each and everyone who suffers so.

Which brings me back to my original point - that Zane was STEADFAST, a beacon. He was TRUE. And how is that?

It is that he never wavered from his essential self - his character - his philosophy, which was to INQUIRE - to relentlessly inquire into the meaning of our lives, into the society in which we find ourselves, and into the many societies, past and present, in which all of humanity has found itself.

Zane was a seeker of truth - ALWAYS. He needed to understand how we function - as individuals and as social groups. His inquiring mind and - more and more - his astute *perspective* on how it all works, never wavered. His desire to hear *all* perspectives and make sense of the human struggle - to cope with discrimination, war, poverty - this never

wavered. He was STEADFAST in MY eyes! He could always be counted on to look deeply into the many sides of a question. I loved this about him.

Whether I was seeking personal advice, or we were analyzing an event, or a belief system - he always gave me a fresh and open unsectarian opinion.

Zane was an Atheist who studied many religions and wrote hymns .

A poet who deeply loved science.

He was an activist who loved to get away from activity and ideas and live in the natural moment - to be *in* a forest, to *give himself up* to a storm.

He was a political intellectual who studied Eastern centredness through tai chi and chi gong.

He swam - and debated - and sang - and wrote and analyzed - and danced - or played his music - and listened respectfully - *always respectfully* - to the views of his opponents - and he fought the hard fight.

Yes, Zane remained TRUE. He never lost perspective despite witnessing political defeats, or despite his daily struggle to remain sane and not get lost. It is this rare TRUENESS that I SO admired and will so miss.

He was a special kind of man - kind, open, curious, devoted, determined - and above all *political*. He understood the world and our tasks ahead in a way few understand. And he remained thus for his forty-five adult years. This example of steadfastness - in the face of immense personal pain - was my brother's gift to ME and – I believe - to us ALL. I will surely mourn his absence

Bonnie Boyd